

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY PRAGUE IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 147023

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OTRA, OVIP, SGEN, PINT

SUBJECT: VISIT BY APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION REPRESENTATIVES

REF: STATE 084528

1. WE ARE SENDING YOU BY SEPTTEL INFORMATION ON THE MEMBERS, ITINERARY, AND PURPOSE OF THE APPEAL OF CONSCIENCE FOUNDATION (ACF) DELEGATION LED BY RABBI ARTHUR SCHNEIER WHICH WILL VISIT THE USSR, CZECHOSLOVAKIA, HUNGARY, AND ROMANIA LATER THIS MONTH.

2. AS STATED IN REFTTEL, EUR/EE OFFICERS MET WITH RABBI SCHNEIER LAST MARCH AND ADVISED HIM TO CONTACT CZECHOSLOVAK EMBASSY DCM KUKAN IN ARRANGING THE ACF DELEGATION'S TRIP. WE INFORMED RABBI SCHNEIER THAT, GIVEN PRESENT STATE OF US-CZECHOSLOVAK RELATIONS, IT WOULD BE BEST FOR HIM TO APPROACH CZECHOSLOVAK AUTHORITIES DIRECTLY RATHER THAN TO HAVE THE DEPARTMENT ACT AS AN INTERMEDIARY. THIS APPROACH SEEMS TO HAVE WORKED WELL. RABBI SCHNEIER TOLD US THAT, WHEN KUKAN LEARNED THAT THE ACF DELEGATION WANTED TO VISIT
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CZECHOSLOVAKIA AFTER THE USSR, HE ARRANGED THE MEETINGS MENTIONED IN PARA 3 BELOW. WE HAVE STAYED IN THE BACKGROUND AND HAVE MADE NO MENTION TO THE CZECHOSLOVAK EMBASSY THAT WE KNOW ABOUT THE ACF DELEGATION'S VISIT.

3. KUKAN MET WITH RABBI SCHNEIER ON JUNE 7 AND INFORMED HIM THAT MEETINGS FOR THE ACF DELEGATION HAVE BEEN SCHEDULED WITH HRUZA, THE HEAD OF THE SECRETARIAT FOR CHURCH

AFFAIRS; WITH CARDINAL TOMASEK; WITH HOCHMAN, THE HEAD OF THE CZECH CATHOLIC NEWSPAPERS; WITH NOVAK, THE HEAD OF THE HUSSITE CHURCH; WITH HAJEK, AN ELDER OF THE SYNOD OF THE EVANGELICAL CHURCH; AND WITH RADVANSKY, THE SECRETARY OF THE JEWISH COMMITTEE. RADVANSKY WILL ACCOMPANY THE DELEGATION IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA AND HELP TO COORDINATE THEIR VISIT. IN RESPONSE TO SCHNEIER'S QUESTION, KUKAN SAID THEY SHOULD ALSO VISIT BRATISLAVA. (WE ASSUME THAT KUKAN WILL ARRANGE APPOINTMENTS THERE FOR THEM.) KUKAN ASKED RABBI SCHNEIER WHOM ELSE THE ACF DELEGATION WOULD LIKE TO MEET. WE WILL SUGGEST TO RABBI SCHNEIER THAT HE ASK FOR AN APPOINTMENT IN BRATISLAVA WITH BISHOP GABRIS.

4. THE ACF UNDERSTANDS THAT HRUZA IS A HARD-LINER AND IS INTERESTED IN MEETING WITH SOMEONE OF MINISTERIAL RANK AND, IF POSSIBLE, MORE MODERATE IN APPROACH. WE WOULD APPRECIATE YOUR SUGGESTIONS IN THIS REGARD AND IN REGARD TO OTHER CHURCH GROUPS WHICH THE DELEGATION SHOULD MEET.

5. RABBI SCHNEIER ASKED IF WE COULD SUGGEST A LIST OF REQUESTS, LARGE AND SMALL, WHICH THE DELEGATION MIGHT POSE WHICH MIGHT, IF GRANTED, HELP TO PROMOTE RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE AND FREEDOM IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA. IN KEEPING WITH ITS STANDARD MODUS OPERANDI ON SUCH VISITS, ACF DELEGATION

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TION WOULD PLAN TO PRESENT SUCH A LIST, PERHAPS 10 OR 12 ITEMS LONG, TO CZECHOSLOVAK OFFICIALS IN HOPES THAT AT LEAST ONE OR TWO WOULD BE ACCEPTED OR OTHERWISE ACTED ON. RABBI SCHNEIER CITED AS POSSIBLE EXAMPLES REQUEST (GRANTED IN USSR) TO IMPORT COPIES OF OLD TESTAMENT, QUESTIONS CONCERNING PRESERVATION OF CHURCHES AND CEMETERIES, ETC. WE PROMISED TO GET BACK TO THE RABBI AFTER CONSULTING WITH THE EMBASSY. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS YOU MAY HAVE ON THIS REQUEST AND THAT IN PREVIOUS PARA BY JUNE 13 AT LATEST. (DEPARTMENT RECOGNIZES THAT REQUEST FOR LIST OF ITEMS MAY WELL BE DIFFICULT FOR EMBASSY AND PROBABLY CAN BE BETTER DRAWN UP BY ACF AFTER REPEAT AFTER THEIR TALKS WITH CZECHOSLOVAK RELIGIOUS LEADERS. WE WILL PASS THIS THOUGHT ON TO RABBI SCHNEIER BUT NEVERTHELESS WOULD APPRECIATE WHATEVER SUGGESTIONS YOU CAN MAKE AT THIS TIME.)

6. AS NOTED IN SEPTTEL MENTIONED IN PARA 1, THE ACF DELEGATION WOULD APPRECIATE A BRIEFING BY BYRON MORTON

AND A MEETING WITH THE AMBASSADOR SOON AFTER THEIR

ARRIVAL. THEY WOULD ALSO VERY MUCH APPRECIATE IT IF
THE AMBASSADOR COULD HOST COCKTAILS IN THEIR HONOR AND
INVITE THE OFFICIALS WHOM THEY WILL MEET AND OTHER
APPROPRIATE GUESTS. VANCE

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